

the American political system to benefit the wealthy at the expense of the middle class.

A number of Republican Senators have rushed over here to defend the Koch brothers. That is hard to comprehend, but they have done it. If someone asked me—and no one has, but I will give my opinion anyway—billionaires seem perfectly capable of defending themselves. They do it with hundreds of millions of dollars. I am sure it has over the past couple of years reached close to \$1 billion spreading these falsehoods. Remember, they don't just do it under the phony banner of Americans for Prosperity, they divert money to a lot of other organizations; for example, millions of dollars to the chamber of commerce, which runs ads against Democratic Senators.

They are capable of defending themselves. But when Senate Republican Senators rush to defend the Koch brothers, they are also defending the Koch brothers' radical philosophy—and it is radical. How do we know it is radical? Because they said it is radical. They said so. I am not making those words up. One of the brothers kept harping on the fact that he had a radical philosophy, and they do.

I ask my Republican colleagues in the Senate, is even one—is even one—willing to stand and disavow the Koch brothers' radical agenda? It is radical. It is radical because they say it is radical—and it is radical. All we have to do is look at it.

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to privatize Social Security?

Will they come to the floor and reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to end Medicare as we know it?

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to end the guarantee of affordable, quality, health care and put insurance companies back in charge so tens of millions of Americans are again one heart attack or car accident away from bankruptcy?

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to allow insurance companies to deny coverage for a child with a heart murmur, a survivor of breast cancer, a teen who suffers from acne or absolutely anyone with a preexisting condition no matter how minor?

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to eliminate minimum-wage laws and workplace safety standards? That is what the Koch brothers want.

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to decimate America's public education system? That is what they want.

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to roll back environmental safeguards and give themselves the unfettered right to pollute our air and water? We have to look out for our children and our grandchildren having pure water to drink, good air to breathe—not with the Koch brothers. That isn't what they want.

Will Senate Republicans reject the Koch brothers' radical plan to give more tax breaks to the richest of the rich—to profitable oil companies, corporations who ship jobs overseas, and billionaires who pay lower taxes than their secretaries?

Not one Republican stepped forward, so obviously they must agree with the Koch brothers' radical philosophy. Republicans are willing to defend the Koch brothers on the floor of this Senate, but are they willing to defend the Koch brothers' radical agenda as well? I guess that is what they are doing by coming to the floor.

If Republicans don't support the Koch brothers' "survival of the richest" philosophy, all they have to do is say so because the truth is it will be terrible to allow the Koch brothers to buy Congress and to buy our country. And that is what they are trying to do.

It would be catastrophic to allow the Koch brothers' Congress to devastate the American middle class with their richest-take-all policy agenda.

This discussion isn't only about fairness or the democratic way. This discussion isn't only about the inherent danger in allowing two multibillionaire oil barons to buy America's political system. This is also about how these two multibillionaires would use a political system, once they have bought it, and how they would abuse it in order to add zeros to the bottom line while hurting middle-class families.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

U.S. TRAGEDIES

Mr. MCCONNELL. I begin this morning by extending my sympathy to families of the victims in yesterday's explosion in Harlem. News reports suggest a truly tragic loss of life and a lot of injuries, so it is a very sad day in New York today.

As usual, in a catastrophe such as this, the response from firemen, police, and first responders was both quick and courageous. Many ordinary citizens who just happened to be in the area showed a lot of humanity and a lot of heroism too.

We are grateful for them and we are all hoping and praying for a fully speedy recovery for those who were injured. These kinds of tragic accidents always take a big toll on the communities where they take place.

A few months back there was a horrible house fire in western Kentucky that took the lives of eight children and their mother. It was devastating to the entire community and still is, so we are thinking of them also today.

ANTI-FREE SPEECH

Mr. MCCONNELL. I wish to take a moment to address anti-free speech legislation the Obama administration has made a priority for this term. It is a regulation that comes in the wake of an unprecedented IRS attack on Americans' civil liberties and it represents a direct assault on the First Amendment.

First, let's be clear. This is not some partisan issue. Right across the political spectrum the American people agree this is a terrible idea. That is probably why it has generated more public backlash than any similar regulation in our entire lifetime.

Americans on the left hate it. Americans on the right hate it. Unions, business groups, environmentalists, conservatives, the ACLU, all of them have expressed concern. It is very rare to see a coalition that broad agree on anything in this town. Yet it is easy to see why Americans would be so united in opposition to this regulation.

The First Amendment exists to protect political speech. That was what the Founders had in mind when they wrote First Amendment political speech. The government should be doing everything it can to protect that right, not hurt it.

That is why we saw a record number of Americans register their complaints with the IRS. In fact, there were more than 140,000 comments—140,000 comments—on this regulation, which I hear is the highest number ever received in the agency's entire history. And let's not forget the IRS has a long way to go to regain public trust these days. Too many Americans look at the agency and see an instrument of political harassment rather than a bureau of tax processors. So if the agency wants to regain trust and return to its true mission, then it simply has to get out of the speech regulation business altogether. The IRS needs to get out of the speech regulation business altogether, and the Obama administration can do that.

Look. The administration ran this idea up the flagpole. In the midst of a historic crisis of public confidence at the IRS, it decided to upend more than half a century of practice and rewrite the rules on how Americans could express themselves, how they could be heard. They asked for comments, and the American people let them know what they thought in over 140,000 comments, almost all of them in opposition.

This regulation needs to go. This regulation needs to go, and it needs to go now. It is in the administration's power to make that happen. All it has to do is to listen to the American people who are speaking out in record

numbers—record numbers—and put an end for good to the idea that the law should be used to harm political enemies.

Let's protect the First Amendment and restore integrity to the IRS at the same time by withdrawing this awful regulation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN DAVID I. LYON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to speak about a U.S. airman lost in battle who has left behind a saddened but grateful country. Capt. David I. Lyon of Sandpoint, ID, was killed in action on December 27, 2013, in Kabul, Afghanistan, when his convoy was intentionally and deliberately attacked by the enemy with explosive devices. Captain Lyon's mission was an advisory one for the Afghan National Army Commandos. He was 28 years old.

For his service in uniform, Captain Lyon received several medals, awards, and decorations, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Meritorious Unit Award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

As a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy, David was a star track and field athlete. As a team captain who is still ranked third all-time in academy history for indoor and outdoor shot put, his teammates gave David the nickname "Leonidas"—after the ancient Greek warrior-king of Sparta—for his courage against fearful odds.

"Oh captain, my captain, Leonidas, we salute you. You will never be forgot," says Scott Irving, who was David's assistant coach. David "knew the risk he was taking and embraced it without hesitation or fear," Scott adds. "That's another Leonidas trait, I would say."

David's wife, Capt. Dana Lyon, is an officer in the U.S. Air Force and an Air Force Academy graduate, where she herself was a two-time NCAA champion in the javelin throw. Her family hails from Lexington, KY, and I had the honor of speaking with them and hearing firsthand about David's service and tragic sacrifice.

"Dave was known as a tender warrior and a protector," says Rick Pounds, Dana's father and David's father-in-law. "He was lighthearted and a gentle giant. Kind and compassionate to everyone he met, Dave's smile would light up a room. If my daughter would have given me the task of 'go find me a husband anywhere,' he is who I would have picked."

"Dave loved the principles upon which our country was founded, and

died in defense of them," Rick continued. "More importantly, he was a faithful follower of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, in whom our liberty and freedom is derived."

David attended the Air Force Academy, where he graduated in 2008. While there, he was a 3-year letter winner for the track and field team. He became a Mountain West Conference champion and was named to the National Strength and Conditioning Association All-American Team and received the Laura Piper Ironman Award. This award is named for a 1991 Air Force Academy graduate and former track and field star who was killed in action in Operation Desert Shield in Iraq. David's shot put throw of 57 feet, 11 inches earned him a place in the academy's record books.

"That gives you a sense of his intensity and his drive and his determination," said Scott Irving. "When he was team captain, he would get upset with other[s] . . . if they didn't give everything they could give—it bothered him if they didn't try to take their God-given talents to the highest level. That was David, day in and day out."

After graduation from the academy, David excelled in his Air Force career. Lt. Col. James Lovewell, his former squadron commander, recalls how much David impressed him. "The consistency of his character showed across many facets of his life," Lieutenant Colonel Lovewell says. "He was very humble and tireless in serving others. He had a superb work ethic. He was a servant leader—he served people just as much as he led them."

Assigned to the 21st Logistics Readiness Squadron at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, David was picked over more senior officers to become the group commander's right-hand man. He worked above and beyond what was asked of him.

"I joked I was going to start calling him 'Boomerang,' because he would come into work and I told him there's nothing more he could do, and invariably he would just come back," said Lieutenant Colonel Lovewell. "He was sticking around to make sure I was taken care of."

David and Dana were both serving their country in Afghanistan at the same time. David worked in logistics, Dana in acquisitions. "He would always talk about how proud he was of her over there, taking care of the mission, as he was," Lieutenant Colonel Lovewell recalls.

Just before David's tragic death, the couple were able to have Christmas dinner together one final time.

"Every day was always the best day of my life with him, so every day just got better," Dana said. "The last 2 days were the best 2 days we've spent together."

Because they were based in Colorado Springs, David and Dana maintained their ties to the Air Force Academy. They coached and mentored young athletes, sponsored cadets, and volun-

teered with the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program. They had members of the academy track and field team over for meals. David also enjoyed camping, hiking, lifting weights, and listening to country music with the windows down with his wife.

Dana's brother Eric Pounds is also an Air Force captain and admired his brother-in-law both as a dedicated airman and a beloved member of the family. "They both loved the Air Force," Eric says of his sister and brother-in-law. "They both wanted to fight, and they both wanted to protect their country. [David] did that at home, and he did that in the Air Force. He was a protector and a provider, and I'm just really proud of him."

We are thinking of David Lyon's beloved ones today, including his wife Dana; his parents Bob and Jeannie Lyon; his brother Sean Lyon; his parents-in-law Rick and Nancy Pounds; his grandparents Ray and Imogene Davis; his step-grandmother Beth Davis; his brothers-in-law Eric Pounds and Darren Pounds; and many other beloved family members and friends.

It was my honor to speak with the family members of Captain Lyon, just as it is an honor for me to share his story with my colleagues in the Senate today. I know we as a nation send our condolences to this brave military family for the loss of such an incredible husband, son, friend, and dedicated airman. I want them to know the Senate has paused today in memoriam to Capt. David I. Lyon to pay tribute to his life of service and sacrifice half a world away. He will be remembered, and he will be missed by those who knew him and loved him.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tomorrow President Obama is scheduled to sit down for an interview with a health care Web site called WebMD. The President will take questions about his health care law, and he is going to try one more time to convince people across the country that his health care law hasn't really been a complete disaster.